

Pharmaceuticals & Personal Care Products in the Environment

EPA Region 3- Philadelphia - & Other Regions, Labs, & HQ

Description of activity: Pharmaceuticals & Personal Care Products (PPCP) pose a challenging mix of issues across a broad array of environmental programs—water, waste, air, and research—as well as posing a communications challenge.

EPA Region 3 Pharmaceuticals Workgroup brings together managers and staff from waste, drinking water, wastewater, pollution prevention and innovation programs to understand the many issues and try to develop sustainable solutions. Several Region 3 states and one municipality are also represented on this workgroup. The workgroup is funding a pilot program with a non-profit organization, meeting with pharmaceutical manufacturers and academia, and reaching out to pharmacists and environmental leaders to tackle the concerns which are facing anyone trying to address this issue. The pilot program to be implemented by the non-profit organization will provide clear environmental data about educational efforts and changing of disposal behavior.

EPA also has a national workgroup, called the Regional PPCPs Network, composed of EPA regions, HQ (OW, OSWER, OPPTS, ORD) & ORD labs. The workgroup is providing input into the federal inter-agency task force on Pharmaceuticals in the Environment, the EPA PPCP web site, possible effluent guidelines for the healthcare sector, the addition of pharmaceuticals into the universal waste rule and other agency endeavors. In addition, workgroup members are conducting and overseeing much of the research into the many aspects of the issue of PPCPs in the environment. The workgroup brings together the research and policy/implementation aspects of the agency for what is a more coordinated approach on an issue of great importance to the public. Workgroup members also regularly field calls from the media and make presentations on the issue.